

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) An incoming mail monitoring system, said system comprises:
 - a plurality of mailers' units that stores unique information contained in a postal indicia affixed to mail;
 - a plurality of receptacles that reads and stores the unique information contained in the postal indicia before the mail enters the interior of the receptacle; and
 - a data center that receives information stored by the mailers' units and the receptacles to identify the mailer and assess the possibility of the presence of life-harming material in the mail.
2. (original)The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the receptacle units include a scanner that reads the postal indicia.
3. (original)The system claimed in claim 2, wherein the scanner captures and interprets the information contained in the postal indicia.
4. (original)The system claimed in claim 2, wherein the scanner is located in a control chamber.

5. (original)The system claimed in claim 4, wherein the control chamber has a locked door for isolating suspect mail.

6 (currently amended) The system claimed in claim 4, wherein the interior of the receptacle comprises:

an inner chamber that receives mail from the control chamber that is not suspected of having life harming material.

7. (original)The system claimed in claim 6, wherein the inner chamber has a locked door in which when open mail may be removed from the inner chamber.

8. (original)The system claimed in claim 4, further including a slot for depositing mail into the control chamber.

9. (original)The system claimed in claim 8, further including:
means for closing the slot when the mail in the control chamber is suspected of containing life harming substances.

10. (original)The system claimed in claim 8, further comprising means for indicating a message indicating the status of the receptacle.

11. (original)The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the data center correlates the recipient address of the mail with unique information contained in the postal indicia.

12. (original)The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the mailer's unit includes the time and date that the postal indicia was affixed to the mail in the unique information contained in the postal indicia.

13. (original)The system claimed in claim 12, wherein the mailer's unit includes other information regarding the mail piece in the unique information contained in the postal indicia.

14. (original)The system claimed in claim 13, wherein the data center further includes:

means for comparing information received from the mailer's unit with information received from one of the receptacle units.

15. (original)The system claimed in claim 14, wherein the data center further includes:

means for comparing other information received from the mailer's unit with information received from one of the receptacle units.

16. (original)The system claimed in claim 15 wherein the receptacle unit includes:

means for informing the post of possibility of the presence of life-harming material in the mail.

17. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the mailer's unit includes means for automatically transmitting information to the data center at predetermined intervals.

18. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the receptacle includes means for automatically transmitting information to the data center at predetermined intervals.

19. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the postal indicia is on a label that is affixed to the mail piece.

20. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the postal indicia is printed on a piece of paper that may be seen through an envelope forming the mail piece.

21. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique information is encrypted.

22. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique information is printed in an area other than the indicia area of the mail piece.

23. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the mailer's units are digital postage meter units.

24. (original) The system claimed in claim 1, wherein the mailer's units are digital processors.

25. (new) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique information contained in the postal indicia includes a security code.

26. (new) The method claimed in claim 25, wherein the security code is obtained from a recipient address field on the mail and information contained in a postage meter that produces the postal indicia.